CHAPTEE III

THE POSSIBLE FOBBBUNNBK8 OF THE MAMMALIA

THE relationship of Mammals to Vertebrates lying below them in the scale, their origin in fact, is a much-debated question, with many attempted solutions. To enter into this large question in detail would involve a great deal of useless statement of arguments founded upon misleading or upon quite inaccurate " facts." It will perhaps be sufficient if we reflect her© the current view most in vogue at the present, *i.e.* that which would refer the Mammalia to reptiles belonging to the extinct Permian and Triassic group of the Theromorpha (also called Anomodontia). These have been explored lately to a very large extent, and chiefly by Professor Seeley.[1] The very fact that a genus *Tritylodon,* only known by the forepart of the skull, has been called Mammalian and Anomodont by various authors, shows at least the difficulty of differentiating the two groups when the material for study is imperfect. As a matter of fact these Theromorpha are without doubt reptiles; they show, for example, a lower jaw formed out of several distinct pieces, of which the articular articulates with a fixed quadrate on the skull. They possess the characteristic reptilian bones, the "transverse/* the pre- and post-frontals, and there are various other points of structure which leave no room for doubt as to their truly reptilian nature. There are, however, numerous indications of an evolution in the mammalian direction in all parts of the skeleton, to the more important of which some reference will be made here. It may be as well to clear the

[1] A series of papers in the *Phil, Trtws.* for 1888-96, of which a

useful abstract by Professor Osborn was published in the *Aimn&m Nctiwalist,* 1898, p. 809; see also *Gambr* Ned, Hist,* viii 1901, p, $03.